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Community Economic Development Programs in the Greater Vancouver Regional District

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THE GREATER VANCOUVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

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SERA Consulting Corp. has been contracted by the Development Services Department of the Greater Vancouver Regional District to prepare a report on the economic development programs being undertaken by municipalities and community associations in the region.

The information included in this report has been obtained from key representatives of each community and from relevant publications. The report is organized by municipality and contains information on the background, planning phase, and implementation of each economic development program.

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1. THE DISTRICT OF BURNABY

A. Background

In 1980 Council created a new, staff position for a Commercial Industrial Coordinator. A senior member of the Planning Department was appointed to this position which, by policy, is intended to encourage commercial and industrial growth, maintain a healthy tax base, attract clean labour intensive development, and maintain and enhance already existing commercial and industrial enterprises.

Originally, the position of Commercial Industrial Coordinator was part-time. However, as the responsibilities of this position became increasingly time-consuming, the need for a restructuring of the co-ordination function became evident. Consequently, in 1985 a comprehensive program for implementing an improved and more complete service to the investment and development community was developed.

B. Economic Development Program

Planning Phase

The re-structuring of the Commercial Industrial Co-ordination function is based on a team approach, involving four members of the Planning and Building Inspection Department, under the general direction of the Director. One member of the team is designated as the overall co-ordinator and is responsible for co-ordinating the efforts of the function, implementing an operational program and being the Municipal "contact person" for the investment and development community. This position is now full time and has recently been given the new title of Economic Development Co-ordinator.

The other members of the team perform specific tasks of the function. Although they each have other responsibilities within the Planning

Department, priority is given, wherever possible, to the promotion and accommodation of new investment and development in the Municipality. One member is involved in the creation and maintenance of an information services system. Another member operates as a special projects co-ordinator, responsible for overseeing major commercial and industrial projects in Burnaby. Finally, the last member functions as a general policy advisor, ensuring that the program complements and reflects the overall policies of the Municipality.

The adopted program has seven components, the first four of which represent the major efforts that have been initiated thus far. Details of each component are provided in the following section.

Implementation

1. Industrial and Commercial Land Inventory System (LIS)

   (a) Preparation of an Industrial LIS has been on-going for the last 6 months. Although information on some of the industrial areas will be available soon, the complete inventory will not be ready for public distribution until sometime next year.

   For convenience purposes the LIS has categorized Burnaby's industrial lands into 12 major areas. Each area is introduced with: (1) a map illutrating its location within the Municipal context; and (2) a brief description of the area, including its general character, locational attributes, major developments and future potential.

   Site-specific information is also provided on various sub areas within each area. Although the emphasis is on undeveloped properties, where major new capital investment is anticipated or encouraged, the inventory also includes

developed properties that have redevelopment potential. The type of information provided for each sub area includes property address, size, zoning, existing uses, development potential, access, and available services.

(b) Depending on the response to the industrial inventory, consideration will be given to producing a Commercial LIS.

2. Statistical Information Base

(a) Work on the preparation and maintenance of an up-to-date information source providing statistical data related to industrial and commercial development is on-going and relies heavily on Burnaby's developing computer data base system. Presently, data is being collected manually (back to 1980) on rezonings, preliminary plan approvals, building permits and licenses. The proposal is to enter this information into the computer system according to individual property coordinate files. Therefore, when the system is running (hopefully by June, 1987), cross referencing will provide cumulative totals over given time periods and for geographic areas for such items as development statistics by sectors, total square footages by zoning categories and absorption rates. The system will also provide fast and accurate tracking of individual development applications within the approval process.

3. Community Profile

(a) A Community Profile has been produced and distributed in conjunction with the Burnaby Chamber of Commerce.

4. Municipal Promotional/Informational Brochure

(a) A high quality folder has been prepared and will be used for assembling packages of information specifically tailored to individual requests. Since all of the information available in the above components of Burnaby's economic program is produced on separate "fact sheets," only specific topics of interest within each component need be included in these packages.

(b) Consideration is now being given to the preparation of an attractive Investment Brochure, directed at highlighting investment opportunities existing in the community for prospective developers and investors.

5. Municipal Procedure Manuals

(a) The development of concise and simple procedure manuals describing in lay terms the major procedures for obtaining municipal approvals has reached the planning stage only. These manuals will most likely be directed at zoning, preliminary plan, and building permit approvals for commercial and industrial developments.

6. Inventory Profile of Government Incentive Programs

(a) The Economic Development Co-ordinator plans to give priority to producing an inventory of all the development incentive programs provided by the Federal and Provincial Governments that would be applicable to Burnaby. Direct contact will be maintained with all the agencies that administer these programs, and promotional material will be requested that can be distributed to prospective investors and developers where

appropriate, clients will be referred to particular agency contacts for further information on specific details of the various programs.

7. Other Relevant Program Initiatives

(a) The Economic Development Coordinator recently presented Burnaby's economic program at a meeting of the community's Loaned Executive Assistance Program (LEAP). Initiated by the municipality, the program is intended to encourage liaison between, and input from, the public sector and the business communities on projects of interest to both parties. Although involvement thus far has been with municipal projects only, the intent of the program is to allow for public and private participation in private sector projects as well. Meetings are attended by senior management of the municipality and senior executives from the private sector who act as a steering committee, often appointing a task force to work directly on a project. At the recent meeting noted above, it was decided that a task force be formed to examine the need in Burnaby for an Economic Development Strategy, given the municipality's established economic program.

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2. THE MUNICIPALITY OF DELTA

A. Background

For several years, the Delta Chamber of Commerce has been under contract with the Municipality to coordinate tourism and economic development in the community. Until recently, these functions have been combined. However, the Chamber now develops two separate work programs which are presented, with accompanying budgets, to Council for approval at the start of each fiscal year.

In 1986, the Chamber's proposed work program for economic development included the development of a Strategy, to be undertaken with funding assistance from the Provincial-Municipal Partnership Program. It also proposed the production of a Community Profile, to be prepared by staff hired under the Federal Government Job Development Program. Both projects were approved and work has begun on each.

B. Economic Development Program

Planning Phase

Following the Chamber's recommendation, an Economic Development Strategy Steering Committee (EDSSC) was appointed by Council to assist in the strategy-development process. Since this process represents a co-operative venture between the Chamber of Commerce and the Municipality, EDSSC membership includes representatives from Council, Municipal staff and the Chamber. Representatives from the business and agricultural communities were also added at a later stage.

The Project Team, responsible for managing the process and drafting the strategy, consists of the Chamber of Commerce Manager and the Municipal Planner. Money for engaging consultants to assist with technical advice has also been included in the budget.

Preparation of the Strategy is still in the initial stages whereby the current strengths and weaknesses of the Municipality are being identified from an economic develoment perspective. A very successful public workshop was held in early November to get input on this issue from a wide range of community leaders. The ideas generated during this workshop will be refined and prioritized into a workable list of strengths and weaknesses in another public seminar to be held early next year.

Although it is too early to identify specific economic sectors that will be targetted in the Strategy, both the Municipal Planner and the Chamber Manager agree that development of their industrial lands will be given high priority. According to the Chamber Manager, preservation of the agriculture and fishing sectors and promotion of the tourism sector were also identified in the recent public workshop as being significant from an economic development perspective.

Important background information for the development of the Strategy is being provided by the Community Profile which should be ready for public distribution in early 1987. Delta's Official Community Plan, adopted March 1986, also provides significant direction to the Steering Committee. Particularly relevant are the Plan's Industrial and Agricultural policies which call for the preparation of "detailed Industrial and Agricultural Land Use Strategy Plans." Development of these Strategy Plans will be intricately connected with Delta's Economic Development Strategy.

A major proposal for industrial growth has recently been presented by the Municipal Planner to both the EDSS Committee and Council. This proposal suggests that the Municipality explore the possibility of a contemporary (multi billion dollar) Western Port and Industrial Park facility, linked with existing and new industrial development along River Road. A sketch concept plan has received Council's approval in principle and Terms of Reference for the preparation of a long-range concept plan have been prepared. Council is presently seeking senior government financing for an engineering feasibility study.

Known locally as Burns Bog, most of the subject property is owned by one developer. According to the Planning Consultant, long-range plans for the site could require dredging of a 400 to 600 acre water basin, 40 feet deep. The preliminary concept also proposes that the facility could include: 600 to 800 acres of prime industrial property surrounding the water basin; docking for container traffic and general cargoes; new rail and road access; barge handling facilities; and possibly an office, hotel, and communications complex for industrial business, as well as a short airstrip for cargo aircraft and lighter than air cargo carrying machines (Planning Department Reports to EDSSC and Council, June and July, 1986).

Significant, is the very pro-active role that is being considered by the Municipality with respect to industrial development. Contrary to the past, where the Municipality relied largely on the piece-meal initiatives of private developers, these plans call for a comprehensive approach that will require considerable Municipal initiative and government funding.

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3. THE CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER

A. Background

During the past two decades the emergence and growth of new commercial areas, and changes in port technology, resulted in a decline in economic activity in the City of New Westminster. In response to this decline, the City of New Westminster and the British Columbia Development Corporation embarked on a joint redevelopment program which covered both the downtown and the industrial waterfront. The exceptional results of this program are evident in the Westminster Quay Development: a 45 acre site presently containing a waterfront promenade, a market and 300 housing units.

At the same time as the redevelopment initiative was underway, the local community became interested in playing an active role in encouraging employment growth and assisting business development. This interest was spearheaded in November 1983 by the Presidents of Douglas College and the Downtown New Westminster Association who invited a broad cross section of community leaders to a meeting to discuss local, community based economic development initiatives. There was a consensus among the 50 people who attended the meeting that community based economic development should, and could, be undertaken in New Westminster. A follow-up meeting was, therefore, organized and the Royal City Development Group (RCDG) was born.

B. Economic Development Program

Planning Phase

At the first meeting of the RCDG, members were asked to divide into two committees. The Community Development Committee and the Economic Development Committee. The focus of the Community Development Committee was on community development with respect to the general quality of life and social stability of the New Westminster area. The Economic

Development Committee was concerned with economic develoment in its more tradition sense, and set about focusing on three objectives:

- preparation of a Community Economic Profile;
- creation of an Economic Development Strategy, and
- identification of a program and organization to implement the Strategy.

A consultant was retained to prepare the Economic Profile and a three person task force, chosen from RCDG members, was established to guide and monitor its development. The Profile, which described the current level of economic activity in the community, was published in January 1985. Local organizations were approached to make contributions to fund the printing of the Profile; the New Westminster and District Labour Council made a substantial contribution towards this end.

Before the profile was complete, another task force was formed and given responsibility for the development and overall management of an Economic Development Strategy. Although it was recognized that professional services would be useful to provide enrichment and technical analysis, such services did not substitute for community based participation at every stage of the strategy preparation.

In April 1986 a draft Strategy Report was presented to the RCDG, which by this time had incorporated as the Royal City Community Development Association (RCCDA). The document went through a series of reviews and approval by each of the community organizations involved. The final report was approved by City Council and other key component organizations in July 1986.

Implementation

The Economic Strategy includes a detailed implementation program and organizational proposal which recommended that the RCCDA itself become the

economic development association for New Westminster, under the name of the New Westminster Development Association (NWDA). This new association was established in October 1986. Its organizational structure will include: a volunteer Executive Committee, elected from the general membership of the NWDA; a volunteer Economic Advisory Council made up of labour and management representatives; and a staff of three, including a Manager of Economic Development. The association has an annual budget of $100,000, which is provided from City, Provincial and Federal Government sources and private contributions.

The goal of the NWDA is to maintain and enhance the existing economic base of New Westminster. In achieving this goal the following primary activity commitments, identified in the Economic Development Strategy, have been included in their 1986-1987 program:

- Set up the management structure and facilities for the NWDA and establish mechanisms that will bring about ongoing community awareness and involvement.

- Establish a Task Force for the purpose of tourism development and marketing.

- Encourage the development of new enterprises that will both complement existing secondary manufacturing and use the skills of the existing labour force.

- Establish New Westminster as a center for excellence and innovation in the forest industry, both in terms of management and technology. Specific activities should focus on: business revitalization as well as attraction and development of new businesses; value-added production; incubator facilities; and encouragement of export businesses.

- Implement an industrial development strategy, commencing with the identification of specific economic opportunities for use of industrial land in the Braid Street and Queensbourough areas.

- Implement a community development-related marketing program focusing on both broad "image" issues as well as specific sectoral targets and opportunities.

- Review and asses the range of innovative community-based economic and employment initiatives; select those initiatives most appropriate to New Westminster and prepare action plans.

- Assess both the need and viability of a co-operative and financial institution for venture capital funding and take appropriate action.

- Support the development and retention of major health care facilities in New Westminster.

The planning phase of the New Westminster Community Economic Development Program proved to be a resource efficient and innovative approach to economic development. Given the broad based support for this Program, the implementation of the above noted activities is expected to be successful.

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4. NORTH EAST SECTOR

City of Port Coquitlam, City of Port Moody, District of Coquitlam

A. Background

Unlike New Westminster, where the decline of economic activity was physically evident, in the North East Sector (a sub-region made up of the communities of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody) the effects of the recession of the early eighties were not as visible. Therefore, in August 1984, the Coquitlam Chamber of Commerce, which serves all three communities, hosted a meeting in an attempt to increase the communities' awareness of the high level of unemployment and small business failure in the sub-region, and to initiate broad based community interest in a sub-regional economic development effort.

The New Westminster Community Economic Development experience provided an inspiration to those attending the August 1984 meeting (attendees included representatives from the three Municipalities, industry, business, the School Board, and Douglas College). However, it was recognized that, although the interest and initiative was similar to the New Westminster experience, the structure and process would have to be different.

The Coquitlam Chamber of Commerce saw its primary role as facilitating co-operative efforts that would be beneficial to all 3 communities. Detailed community planning efforts and specific plans of action were seen to be the responsibility of the separate communities.

B. Economic Development Program

Planning Phase

Two committees, under the Board of the Chamber of Commerce, were established at the August 1984 meeting: the Economic Development Committee and the Employment Improvement Committee. Although each

committee identified different priorities and action programs, their work and membership was closely integrated.

The Economic Development Committee, through a Technical Committee, set about directing the preparation of an Economic Profile for the sub-region. The committee was successful in obtaining a Canada Works Grant, which provided funding for temporary staff. The Economic Profile was completed in the Spring of 1986. Funds for printing the document were secured by obtaining a commitment from local organizations and businesses to buy copies of the profile.

While the Profile was being prepared, the Employment Improvement Committee developed and facilitated the implementation of an Employers' Needs Survey. The results of the survey made it apparent that secondary manufacturing was not well represented in the sub-region. Local manufacturers were highly reliant on imports to the sub-region, many of which had the potential to be produced locally.

Both committees came together to explore the feasibility of import substitution initiatives. Out of their research came an interest in the formation of a community-based, non-profit, incubation centre. This centre would provide both a sheltered business environment, and support for small secondary manufacturing firms.

The Economic Development Committee is presently preparing the Terms of Reference for a study that will further explore the feasibility of creating an incubation centre in the sub-region. The Provincial Ministry of Economic Development has promised to match any funds raised in the community towards hiring a consulting firm to undertake the study.

Individual Municipal Economic Development Programs

Apart from the co-operative economic development program co-ordinated by the Chamber of Commerce, each of the communities in the sub-region have undertaken individual economic development initiatives. The organization,

actions and priorities of these individual economic development programs are briefly described below.

The City of Port Coquitlam

In July 1984 The City of Port Coquitlam hired a consultant to prepare an Industrial Development Strategy. In developing the Strategy the major strengths of the community were identified to be in the area of secondary manufacturing, with a particular emphasis on precision manufacturing. The Strategy and related programs of action have been, and continue to be, directed towards developing and marketing this sector. A number of specific activities have been undertaken.

- installation of services, including a sewer pump station and local sewer services;

- preparation of a new Industrial Zoning Schedule;

- installation of directory signs within the industrial areas; and

- preparation of an Investment Brochure.

Economic Development decisions and activities are processed by two committees: The Economic Development Committee, composed of Council and staff representatives; and the Economic Development Advisory Group, made up of local business persons and industrialists.

The District of Coquitlam

The District of Coquitlam deals with economic development initiatives through the Land Use Committee, a standing committee of Council. Promotional tools have been developed by the Planning Department which include visitor pamphlets, a video, and a package of investment orientated information on the municipality.

There has been a recent initiative to develop a joint marketing strategy with the City of Port Coquitlam. The details and focus of the strategy are still to be worked through. The accomplishments of both this joint marketing initiative, and the Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee will largely determine what approach the District will take towards Economic Development in the future.

The City of Port Moody

In the City of Port Moody economic development initiatives are processed by the Administrator's office and the Economic Development Committee of Council.

The City's main focus in encouraging economic activity is to review municipal standards, practices and policies in order to ensure that the City attracts new enterprises, and maintains and enhances existing operations.

The City's industrial zoned lands are relatively small and already well used. The City's current thrust is towards facilitating the construction and marketing of large scale residential developments on City, Provincial and private land.

C. Contacts

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5. THE NORTH SHORE
City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, Municipality of West Vancouver

A. Background

Initial interest in a North Shore Economic Development Program came from the Inter Agency Forum which was brought together by a common concern about high levels of youth unemployment on the North Shore. The solution to the youth unemployment problem seemed to be tied up in the overall level of economic activity on the North Shore. In order to address this bigger picture, the Inter Agency Forum broadened its membership and formed the Ad Hoc North Shore Economic Development Planning Group. The new group was made up of representatives from the three North Shore municipalities, the North Shore Chamber of Commerce, the Vancouver and District Labour Council, business, industry, social service agencies, and Capilano College.

The first priority of the group, which had no terms of reference and no line of responsibility to any organization, was to develop a "case" to help publicize the need for a concentrated economic development initiative on the North Shore. In developing their case the group examined increases in both the unemployment rate and the number of people relying on income assistance; they then explored the social spin-off effects of these trends. The group also examined various opportunities for economic development and several potential actions arising out of these opportunities.

B. Economic Development Program

Planning Phase

The Ad Hoc Group presented its findings at a public forum held in April 1986. They were received with great interest, and a consensus was reached among those attending the Forum that a more formalized group

should be established to facilitate and coordinate an economic development initiative on the North Shore.

The Ad Hoc Group met for the last time in late April 1986, when, along with the mayors and aldermen of the three North Shore Communities, they set the initial membership and Terms of Reference for the new North Shore Economic Development Advisory Committee. A Technical Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from the planning staff of the three municipalities, the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, was also established.

The proposed Terms of Reference for the new Advisory Committee were developed and discussed at the Committee's first meeting in July 1986. The Terms of Reference consisted of two commitments:

- a short range commitment to develop a North Shore Profile that would aid all 3 municipalities in economic development and job creation activities; and

- a long range vision to try and facilitate agreement on elements and linkages in economic development strategies, common to the municipalities and other relevant businesses and organizations on the North Shore.

Prior to the establishment of the Advisory Committee, a Challenge 86 Grant had been obtained by the Ad Hoc Group to hire students to work with the Technical Committee in the preparation of a North Shore Economic Profile. A progress report on the Profile was presented to the Advisory Committee at its first meeting, and a task force was established to ensure that the Profile would be presented as a working document that was focused on helping and stimulating businesses to expand. The Profile is currently being completed by the District of North Vancouver staff.

Also at its first meeting, the Advisory Group decided to hold a workshop on the preparation of economic development strategies. A second

task force was formed to plan and execute the workshop which was held in October, 1986. At the workshop, the strengths and weaknesses of the North Shore were identified as a first step towards developing an Economic Strategy.

Arising from discussion at the workshop, the Advisory Committee decided to establish four task forces which would work towards the development of draft strategy recommendations in four key sectors of the North Shore economy: tourism; marine related business and industry; general industry; and commerce. These task forces are presently being set up; invitations to become a member have been sent to key actors in each sector. Funds are also being sought to retain a consultant to act as a resource to the task forces in preparation of the strategy recommendations.

Individual Municipal Economic Development Programs

Concurrent economic development initiatives are being undertaken by the individual municipalities on the North Shore. Although each municipality is looking to the Advisory Committee to guide the development of a North Shore Economic Strategy, each municipality envisages playing a lead role in specifying and carrying out action programs.

The City of North Vancouver

The City of North Vancouver has, for a long time, been committed to facilitating quality economic development on the North Shore. They have sent representatives to the North Shore Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee for many years, and have made an on-going commitment to work with the new Advisory Committee in the production of an Economic Strategy. Economic development initiatives are presently processed through the Department of Development Licensing Services, Council, and to a lesser extent through the Advisory Planning Commission.

The City has recently completed a Community Profile and a Promotional Portfolio, both of which are designed as marketing tools. In addition, the Industrial Zoning Schedule is presently being rewritten to better accommodate future industrial development.

The District of North Vancouver

The District of North Vancouver is also actively supporting the efforts of the Advisory Committee and the Technical Committee. Currently economic development decisions and initiatives are dealt with through the Planning Department and Council. Development initiatives on land owned by the municipality are processed through the Land Development Committee.

The Municipality of West Vancouver

Although the Municipality of West Vancouver is also participating in the North Shore economic development initiative, its role in the development and implementation of the Strategy is reduced since it has no industrially zoned land. It will, however, play an active role in developing the potential in areas of common concern; for example, commerce and transportation. As in the other North Shore municipalities, West Vancouver deals with economic initiatives through Council and the Planning Department.

C. Key Contacts

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6. THE TOWNSHIP OF RICHMOND

A. Background

In 1984/85 the Richmond Chamber of Commerce urged Council to reinvigorate the community's economic development efforts. In the past, the Director of Planning had held the title of Industrial Development Officer; however, no formal structure existed for coordinating an economic development function and in the last few years very little promotional effort had been made. Although this was partially due to the fact that Richmond had entered a period of rapid growth, Council agreed that there was a need for Richmond to re-examine its role in economic development. At least two problems were acknowledged to exist: (1) Richmond's system of industrial and commercial zoning which was difficult to administer and not particularly suited to the types of development occurring in the municipality; and (2) the municipal development approvals procedure which could be slow and confusing to potential applicants.

A consultant was, therefore, hired to prepare an Economic Development Strategy and make recommendations on the most appropriate organizational structure for economic development in Richmond.

B. Economic Development Program

Planning Phase

An Economic Development Advisory Group was appointed by Council to provide input and assistance during the development of the Strategy. The 15 members of this group came from a wide variety of backgrounds, representing major interest groups in Richmond.

A Steering Committee composed of three aldermen and five senior staff was also established to provide guidance and direction to the strategy development process. An important function of this committee was to

ensure that the Economic Development Strategy was fully coordinated with the Official Community Plan process, which has been on-going for the past three years.[1] The Economic Development sector of the Plan does, in fact, refer directly to Council's intention to implement the policies in the Strategy and to guide public and private investment towards the targetted economic sectors.

Adopted by Council in May 1986, Richmond's Economic Development Strategy focuses on encouraging the growth of private sector, stable long-term employment in Richmond. General policies that will benefit all sectors of Richmond's economy are presented first; then more detailed action plans for Richmond's nine major economic sectors are described. Four sectors are identified as offering the most significant development opportunities: visitor industry, light industry, airport related development and port development.

Implementation and Future Priorities

Below, the major components of Richmond's Economic Development Strategy are presently along with a cross-section of related actions. Due to the newness of Richmond's economic program, many of the actions listed here, although adopted, have not yet been initiated.

1. Establishment of an effective economic development organizational structure.

    a) Economic Development has now been formally adopted as a municipal function. The person recently appointed Executive Director of Richmond Development Services Division has been given responsibility for this new function as well as for the Planning and the Permits and Licenses Departments.

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[1]Richmond's Community Plan is meant to become official by the end of this year, or the beginning of 1987.

b) Priority will be given to the re-establishment of an Economic Development Advisory Group and the establishment of "public sector support committees."

c) High priority will also be given to coordinating the economic development program with the tourism programs being conducted by both the Richmond and the Greater Vancouver Visitors and Convention Bureaus. The potential for cost-sharing of projects (eg. production and distribution of marketing materials) will be examined.

2. Development of a practical and economic public relations, promotion, advertising and information services systems.

a) A Community Profile was completed in September, 1986.

b) An Investment Brochure is currently in its draft stage and should be ready for public distribution next year. Following the guidelines provided by the Provincial-Municipal Partnership Program, this Brochure will provide information of interest to prospective investors, such as: location and access advantages, labour force and employment statistics, community amenities and services, supply of industrial/commercial land, and economic development organization and contacts.

c) Three different promotional tours of the municipality (industrial, commercial and general) are available for potential investors.

d) High priority will be given to a light industrial marketing program. Richmond is already in the process of developing a computerized land inventory. This resource will be used to maintain and publicize up-to-date information on the supply of

industrial land, particularly serviced, developable, and marketable sites.

3. Maintenance of a good quality supply of marketable land

   a) As part of the Community Plan process, policies are being developed to ensure that (1) industrial land designations will not be significantly reduced, and (2) new supplies of residential land will be designated.

4. Establishment of an efficient and supportive land use and development regulatory system and a reasonable level of property taxation.

   a) High priority will be given to a complete re-structuring of the industrial and commercial zones in order to encourage appropriate development.

   b) Work has already begun on improving the efficiency of the development approval process by, for example, publicizing the procedures and regulations in concise brochures, and assigning one staff member to each major application to act as a contact person for the applicant and to ensure that the application moves through the necessary stages as efficiently as possible.

C. Contact Person

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7. DISTRICT OF SURREY

A. Background

The District of Surrey first showed interest in a municipal economic development initiative in the mid 1960s. As in the City of Vancouver, this initial interest was focused on industrial development. In 1966 an Industrial Development Director was hired, and six years later a separate municipal department was established. Over time the focus of the Economic Development Department has broadened to include the development and marketing of all non-residential activity, thereby including both commercial and institution development in its mandate.

The major thrust of the Economic Development Department's progress has not been aimed at the creation of employment opportunities in the area, but rather at the need to balance the overwhelming growth in the residential sector, with growth in non-residential sectors. An expenditure-revenue study undertaken by the municipality in the late 1970s, showed that residential development, on balance, results in a net financial loss to the municipality while commercial and industrial developments provide more revenue than they use in services. From a municipal taxation perspective it is, therefore, very important that growth in the non-residential sector is balanced by growth in other sectors.

B. Economic Development Program

Planning Phase

In 1983 the Economic Development Department became interested in developing an Economic Development Strategy. At this time the District of Surrey also expressed an interest in developing a Municipal "Corporate Strategy"; it was envisaged that the Economic Development Strategy, along with other municipal plans, could form the building blocks for such a Corporate Strategy:

The Department's main priority in directing the development of the Strategy was that it should form an operational document in which both the goals, and the process for acheiving those goals, would be clearly set out.

A consultant was retained to prepare the Strategy; however, the importance of community consultation during the strategy development process was emphasized. Consequently, the Working Economic Development Advisory Committee was established, comprised of invited representatives from a broad range of business and industrial sectors. In addition, an Economic Development Committee of Council was formed.

During a series of meetings with community and business representatives, two problems were highlighted:

1. Surrey was perceived to have a negative image; and

2. The development approval process was perceived to be a barrier to economic development.

These perceptions were directly addressed in the development of the Strategy, and continue to be important in its implementation.

Completed in November 1984, Surrey's Economic Development Strategy identifies four target sectors: transportation and distribution, agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism. Within each of these sectors, 12 key projects or implementation tools are identified. The objectives of the projects are clearly outlined and the process for acheiving these objectives is discussed. Each project is assigned to a specified municipal staff member and a time frame is attached.

The strategy also presents a general marketing program, comprised of ten principles and five specific projects, to guide the implementation process and promote the municipality's investment opportunities. The perception among the community that the Municipal Hall is a barrier, rather than an

aid, to economic development in Surrey is addressed. Recommendations are made to help the Municipality become, and be perceived as, a stimulant to economic development activity.

Implementation

Since the completion of the Strategy, much has been done to implement the market strategy, streamline the development process and stimulate the target sectors.

A marketing manager has recently been hired by the Economic Development Department (increasing its staff to three members) and tools for marketing the municipality have been, and continue to be, developed (eg. Community Profile, Municipal Logo).

An information package describing the development process has been prepared and widely distributed. In addition, a computerized tracking system has been implemented, allowing the status of individual applications to be quickly and easily identified. Priority is also being given to simplify the Industrial Zoning Schedule in order to decrease the level of uncertainty among would-be-developers, and allow more expedient processing of applications.

With respect to the transportation and distribution sector, a local community plan is being prepared for the Douglas area in order to manage the development activity associated with the adjacent border crossing. The municipality is also in the process of exploring the possibility of a major port related development.

In the agricultural sector the Economic Development Department is encouraging existing agricultural operations to shift from a traditional focus on production to a focus on the marketing of their products. In addition, proposals for agro-industrial development are being encouraged; these operations will help to provide a stable market for agricultural products.

On-going efforts are being made to attract two identified segments of the manufacturing sector:

- mature industries that are looking for new locations; and
- modern technology in areas that have already demonstrated their growth potential and are, therefore, likely to expand and modernize.

A recent success in the tourism sector has been the installation of directory signs both outside and within the boundaries of the community.

The future priorities of the Economic Development Department include:

- upgrading information resources;
- developing new marketing tools;
- increasing marketing activity;
- formalizing an interim agreement with Zhu Hai, Surrey's Sister City; and
- exploring opportunities in the film industry.

C. Contact Person

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8. THE CITY OF VANCOUVER

A. Background

Municipal interest in economic research and development activity began in the City of Vancouver in 1976, largely due to growing concern over (1) the loss of population from the City of Vancouver to the suburbs and (2) the decreasing level of industrial activity in the City. In the Fall of 1977 City Council approved the establishment of a Vancouver Economic Development Office (EDO). In order that regulatory and promotional functions of the municipality be kept separate, the office was established as part of the Finance Department, rather than as part of the Planning Department. The EDO opened in March 1978 with a budget of $100,000 and a staff of three.

Shortly after the EDO opened an Economic Advisory Commission was also established. Over time the Vancouver Economic Advisory Commission (VEAC) has successfully brought together industrial and business leaders, academics and city staff in order to provide Council with broad based, practical and expert economic advice. Initially, both the EDO and the VEAC adopted a piecemeal approach to economic development; however in 1980 they began to consider taking on a more co-ordinated and strategic approach to economic development. The interest of the VEO and VEAC in taking on a more comprehensive approach to economic development was supported by the new mayor, who in 1981 asked the two bodies to undertake the preparation of an Economic Strategy for Vancouver in the 1980's.

B. Economic Development Planning

Planning Phase

In the spring of 1981 an Economic Strategy Committee was appointed to direct the development of the Strategy. Background and discussion papers were prepared and the first draft Economic Strategy for Vancouver in the 1980s was completed in January 1982. Shortly afterwards a second draft

was prepared, and in June 1983, the final report, An Economic Strategy for Vancouver in the 1980s, was approved by Council. Throughout the entire process it was recognized that broad acceptance of the Strategy's principles was necessary for successful implementation. Formal and informal workshops and seminars attended by a broad range of private and public sector groups, were, therefore, held at each stage of the process.

Implementation

The key focus of the Strategy was on building on Vancouver's strengths rather than focusing on its weaknesses. The Strategy had two major elements. The first was a set of strategic initiatives which were developed out of a detailed analysis of Vancouver's strengths:

- promote Vancouver as the 'key' business communications centre linking North America and the Pacific Rim;
- promote Vancouver as an international financial centre;
- promote programs to increase expenditures by tourists in Vancouver;
- develop a program to promote Vancouver's other 'invisible' exports;
- encourage advanced technology manufacturers;
- formulate a development plan for the medical precinct;
- support Vancouver's small business entrepreneurs; and
- encourage the development of light industrial space in the City.

The second element of the Strategy was a group of supporting activities; it was felt that the strategic initiatives could only be attained if development took place in the following supporting areas:

Employment and Human Resources: Human capital was seen to influence the rate of growth of the economy as it determines the ability of enterprises to obtain and use essential resources.

Land Resources: Vancouver's zoning system was identified as being too rigid, and lacking in the flexibility required to develop the key economic activities.

Transport and Communication: An efficient system of movement for people, goods and information was seen to be of great importance in the development of the key economic activities.

Housing: Availability of different types of housing was identified as being important in economic development and employment growth.

Cultural and Community Resources: Cultural and community resources were perceived to make the City liveable and to contribute to its economic life.

Public Policy Framework: The Strategy identified the need for specific initiatives that work towards the development of an integrated approach to economic planning and policy making.

Seven sub-committees and nine task forces were established to undertake research, and the development of sub-strategies for each of the strategic initiatives and supporting activities. The major objective of the sub-committees and task forces was to apply the directions and concepts presented in the Strategy towards the implementation of specific initiatives.

The work of the EDO, VEAC and the sub-committees and task forces has not been restricted to the vision set out in the 1982 Strategy; since then many new initiatives have been researched and developed and implemented. A cross section of both accomplished and on-going initiatives is listed below:

Policy Development

- Provision of input into:
    - Core plan/Vancouver plan;
    - Industrial Zoning Policy Development; and
    - various area plans.

City Procedures and Processes

- Assisted in development of:
  - Motion Picture Co-ordinator;
  - Gas Station regulation; and
  - The Business Advocate's Office

Inter-Governmental Liaison and Lobbying

- Worked with other levels of government on:
  - The establishment of a more autonomous port;
  - The proposal to build Polar 8 Icebreaker;
  - Fishing Boat Moorage;
  - Restoration of the Vancouver-Jasper Tourist Rail Service; and
  - The development of Vancouver as an International Banking Centre.

Research and Information Services

- Compilation and distribution of:
  - The Vancouver Industrial Properties Inventory;
  - Vancouver Economic Data Base;
  - A statistical handbook on the tourism sector; and
  - a marketing brochure.
- Promotion of freer exchange of business information by means of the Business Information Accord.
- Establishment of an urban economic research capability.

Trade Development and Export Marketing

- Promotion of two-way trade in goods and services through trade missions to key Pacific Rim countries; and
- Establishment of a data base of contacts involved in overseas trade.

Tourism

- Promoted and assisted in the reorganization of tourism marketing in Vancouver, resulting in the formation of Tourism Vancouver and the Vancouver Travel Infocentre.

Community Economic Development

- Worked towards establishment of:
  - A Downtown Eastside agency to promote firm start-ups and job creation; and
  - A Downtown Revitalization Program.

Business Development and Firm Start-ups

- Provision of advice and information to firms contemplating start-up/expansion in Vancouver.
- Participation in major business associations and bilateral organizations, and business development programs.

The City's economic development program will continue to address all of the areas listed above. Primary emphasis will, however, be placed on the promotion of tourism and on improving Vancouver's business environment by further development of the supporting activities identified earlier.

C. **Key Contacts**

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9. THE CITY OF WHITE ROCK

A. Background

In 1984/85 White Rock municipal staff began to discuss the advantages of developing a comprehensive approach to economic growth. Since White Rock was in the process of preparing a new Official Community Plan, the value of incorporating an Economic Development Program into this process was examined. The importance of establishing economic policies which would be compatible with other community objectives and which would provide formal guidance for public and private investment was recognized by staff.

A recommendation was, therefore, brought before Council regarding the commencement of an economic development program in the City. Council approved the preparation of an Economic Strategy and agreed that a key part of this process would be the voluntary involvement of a group of knowledgable and representative citizens. Consequently, in March 1985, a citizens' task force on Economic Development was appointed by Council with the mandate to prepare "a local economic development strategy for the economic betterment of (White Rock's) residents and the expansion of its tax base" (see Terms of Reference for Economic Development Task Force).

B. Economic Development Program

Planning Phase

Members of the Task Force included residents of White Rock and/or owners or employees of businesses in the City. An attempt was made to appoint individuals who would represent the interests of all major private and public sector groups in the community. Membership also included the City Administrator and a senior staff person from GVRD's Development Services Department.

In preparing the Economic Development Strategy, the Task Force's first objective was to define what the City's role was, and should be, within the regional economy. It was concluded that "the most suitable economic goal for White Rock is to develop its role as a residential, retirement, cultural, and leisure oriented community by the sea." (See Final Report of the Task Force). Although individual aspects of this role have long been acknowledged by different residents, this goal statement confirmed that the City is a mixture of each component with no single component being particularly dominant.

The next step in the strategy development process was to identify key areas that should be targetted in order to improve the City's overall economic situation. Members of the Task Force divided into a number of sub-committees which, depending on their background and expertise, examined different sectors of the City's economy. Three main target areas were identified (see Final Report of the Task Force):

1. The enhancement of White Rock's tourist/visitor attractions with the aim of extending the tourist season, and encouraging people to use the City's commercial enterprises as well as the beach.
2. The optimization of land use within the City in order to strengthen the City's limited tax base.
3. The utilization of surplus City-owned or controlled land to help increase the City's cash reserves and reduce its reliance on borrowing.

These preliminary findings and recommendations received Council's approval in June, 1985. The final Strategy was then prepared, including detailed action plans required to direct public and private investment towards the three identified target areas.

Adopted by Council in early 1986, the Economic Development Strategy Plan has now been integrated into White Rock's new Community Plan, which is scheduled to become official in December, 1986. Upon adoption

of the Economic Strategy, the Citizens Economic Development Task Force was disbanded and the role of City Administrator was expanded to include the responsibilities of an economic development officer.

Implementation

Worth noting here is the fact that the City of White Rock has no industrial zoning and does not see its role as that of a major commercial centre. White Rock's economic focus differs therefore from many of the other municipal programs in the region which emphasize the promotion of new industrial and commercial investments. Although the objectives are similar (i.e., increase employment, strengthen the tax base), White Rock's Economic Strategy focuses instead on maximizing the economic development potential of the City's existing role as a residential, retirement, cultural and recreational centre. Because the focus is more internal, the scope is narrower and the action plans directed at each of the three key target areas can be more specifically defined. White Rock's Strategy contains, therefore, very detailed recommendations for particular developments in specific areas.

According to the City Administrator, the entire program has been very successful. The Strategy has identified opportunities which exist within the City and provided a context for individual initiatives brought before Council by staff. The key role played by representative members of the public in the strategy development process has enabled Council to act quickly to take advantage of the opportunities.

Already work has begun on implementing approximately half of the approved actions. A brief cross section of these activities includes: incremental construction of a lit pedestrian walkway along the entire beachfront of Marina Drive and enhancement of the beach parking areas; promotion of strata title highrise developments in the Town Centre; initiation of a program to sell undeveloped road allowances for

residential building lots; and liaison with hotel developers to facilitate the construction of new high quality hotel developments in the City.

C. **Contact Person**

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